

THE PROBLEM

Environmental justice is the intersection between the fight for civil rights and for environmental health, ensuring marginalized communities have self-determination and are no longer at the frontlines of activity that harms both the environment and public health. Connecticut must not only address its legacy of injustice where communities are already overburdened with inordinate public health and environmental impacts from affecting facilities. It must also support the empowerment of communities in decision-making processes to stop new and existing sources of pollution.

The approval of affecting facilities, such as power plants, sewage treatment facilities, trash incinerators, and landfills, impacts public health in all communities. These facilities are concentrated in low-wealth urban communities and communities of color of all income levels. These toxic sites are directly responsible for ailments such as high rates of asthma, cancer, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and other learning disabilities. These factors dramatically impact quality of life through exposure to odor, noise, and limited access to open space.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

Update the Environmental Justice Law

Thanks to Public Act 23-202, the state's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, as well as the Siting Council, has been directed to update certain public participation and public notice requirements. They have also been granted the ability to deny permits for new affecting facilities if it would result in significant cumulative environmental or public health impacts in a distressed community already overburdened with pollution.

The next step in this process is for the state to develop and propose regulations for what would constitute a permit denial for a new affecting facility. These regulations must be approved by the General Assembly's Regulations Review Committee.



Apart from the Regulations Review Committee process, there is more that should be done to correct historic environmental injustices, such as:

- ❖ Grant DEEP and the Siting Council the authority to deny permit expansions and permit renewals if the state determines there are less harmful alternatives than the proposed expansion or renewal
- ❖ Classify solid waste transfer stations, chemical recycling facilities, and related hazards as affecting facilities
- ❖ No exemptions for towns to approve permits for affecting facilities if DEEP or the Siting Council has already denied them.

**Environmental justice is racial justice.
A stronger environmental justice
law will support stronger public
health outcomes and protect
our natural environment.**

FAST FACTS

The state identifies Environmental Justice Communities as:

- ❖ Census block groups, for which **30%** or more of the population consists of low-income persons who are not institutionalized and have an income **below 200%** of the federal poverty level
- ❖ Distressed municipalities

The state identifies Affecting Facilities as:

- ❖ Electric generating facilities with a capacity greater than 10 megawatts
- ❖ Sludge or solid waste incinerators or combustors
- ❖ Sewage treatment plants with a capacity greater than 50 million gallons per day
- ❖ Intermediate processing centers volume reduction facilities or multi town recycling facilities with a combined monthly volume in excess of 25 tons
- ❖ new or expanded landfills, including but not limited to, landfills that contain ash, construction and demolition debris, or solid waste
- ❖ Medical waste incinerators
- ❖ Major sources of air pollution as defined by the Clean Air Act

In Connecticut, there are over 600 potential pollution sources in each of our five major metropolitan towns: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford and Waterbury. These five towns combined contain:

- 19% of the state's pollution
- 20% of all potential pollution sources
- 51% of the state's population in poverty
- 71% of the state's minority population

MORE INFORMATION

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